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INSIDE

Lautenberg Urges FAA Autonomy.....Page 18
GA Accidents Decline Slightly.....Page 19
Fuel Management Problems Cited.....Page 20
Business Aviation Briefs.....Page 21
Marketplace.....Page 24

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ENGEN SAYS FAA COMMISSION WOULD 'COVER GROUND ALREADY EXPLORED'

An independent commission to study aviation safety as suggested in a bill introduced by Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) is "unnecessary, and would take additional time to cover ground already explored," said FAA Administrator Donald Engen. Speaking before the Senate aviation subcommittee, Engen said "I do not resist the idea of an independent commission to examine the FAA because of concern of what it may find. To the contrary, we have benefited tremendously from what we have learned of the agency as we have moved through difficult times, but it is time for us to get on with the needed improvements we have already discerned."

With 15 co-sponsors, the bill, S.2417, which was introduced in May (BA, May 12/147), would create an independent commission made up of seven persons "having no ties to the commercial aviation industry or to the FAA...but possessing extensive experience and expertise at the highest level of corporate management" to study aviation safety and FAA's structure. The bill directs the commission to determine whether FAA should be reorganized as an independent federal agency charged solely with safety regulatory functions, ending its dual role of promoting and regulating the industry. "It is time for an intensive, objective re-examination of the FAA, the nation's aviation safety policy and the impact of deregulation on aviation safety," Byrd said. He said the proposed commission should consider whether FAA has been provided adequate resources and has used them effectively and efficiently, and "whether the conflict between the FAA's responsibilities impedes safety."

NTSB: Commission Should Have Aviation Experience

Patricia Goldman, acting chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, testified the committee may "wish to review in some detail" the provision which calls for commission members with no experience in aviation matters. "In view of the apparent intent of the bill, an assessment of FAA's capabilities to carry out its mandated functions efficiently and effectively, the commission lacking aviation expertise, could well be led astray," she said. "The commission would in effect be sorting out technical information of which they may have little or no knowledge." Goldman also questioned a tenet of the bill which would make mandatory all safety recommendations issued by NTSB. "Such a proposal would have a detrimental effect on the Board's effectiveness by limiting it's objectivity in accident investigation. Furthermore, if we can't convince people to adopt recommendation on its merit, perhaps the recommendation isn't appropriate. We must allow affected agencies to have alternative solutions."

The bill received overall support from the Regional Airline Association, Air Transport Association and the Air Line Pilots Association. Alan Stephen, executive vice president of RAA called S.2417 "a very interesting piece of legislation," and said it was "a most timely mechanism" for studying FAA's effectiveness. ATA President William Bolger said while the commission "could make a significant contribution to focusing attention on aviation needs, it is essential that (its) work in no way is permitted to impede current FAA improvement actions." ALPA President Henry Duffy said his association "strongly supports (the bill)" and said it was "most appropriate, considering the dramatic changes that have occurred." He said however "if such a commission is to perform the functions outlined in the bill, the personnel should possess extensive experience in aviation matters."

(Continued on the following page)

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COMPARISON OF ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT IN 1983 AVIATION ACCIDENTS WITH ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT IN AVIATION ACCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED IN 1975-81

	1983	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975
All accidents	3,258	3,715	3,820	4,061	4,498	4,306	4,217	4,232
Fatal accidents	586	707	675	687	794	706	704	674
Valid toxicology tests*	430	524	481	500	553	506	494	478
Positive alcohol tests	39	55	60	39	54	48	52	30
Percent positive	9.1	10.5	12.5	7.8	9.8	9.5	10.5	10.5
Other known alcohol-involved accidents**	5	9	5	9	18	24	19	19
Total alcohol-involved accidents	44	64	65	47	72	72	71	69

*"Valid toxicology tests" are those in which samples were adequate for testing for alcohol, and appropriate testing was performed. Toxicological tests are not always possible. Most of the accidents in which toxicological tests are performed are fatal, but some are nonfatal.

**The category "Other known alcohol-involved accidents" comprises fatal and nonfatal accidents in which alcohol involvement was determined from witness statements.

NTSB Chart

ALCOHOL INVOLVED ACCIDENTS accounted for less than two percent of all aviation accidents during the years 1975-1983, according to National Transportation Safety Board figures. During that period, however, alcohol was involved in a much higher percentage of fatal accidents, ranging from 6.8 percent in 1979 to over 10 percent of all fatal accidents in some years (see chart on the back of Page 22).

* * *

REHOBOTH AIRCRAFTERS AIRPORT in Rehoboth Beach, Del., will close permanently at the end of September, according to George Garrison, president of Garrison Aviation Inc., the facility's fixed-base operator. Garrison, who also is a principal in the property encompassing the 50-year old airport, said the decision to close follows unsuccessful attempts to secure additional financing for development of the airport, which is now expected to be converted into a housing development. Rehoboth Beach is a major summer resort area that attracts thousands of vacationers from the Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Philadelphia areas.

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PENNSYLVANIA AIRLINES carried 45,650 passengers during the month of June, surpassing the record of 45,277 established during the same month last year. Revenue passenger miles were up 7.3 percent, reaching 5.5 million.

* * *

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE AVIATION OFFICIALS will hold its 55th annual meeting in Newport, R.I. on Sept. 7-11. Contact NASAO at (202) 783-0588 for more information.

* * *

ATLANTIC AVIATION has named Jet Aviation a Westwind Aircraft Service Center. Located at Palm Beach International Airport in West Palm Beach, Fla., Jet Aviation is the twelfth Westwind service center in the U.S.

* * *

PETITIONS FOR EXEMPTION from various sections of the Federal Register, along with FAA's disposition of other exemption requests, are reprinted on the back of this page.

* * *

LINJEFLYG A.B. of Sweden has placed a reorder for a Fokker F28. Nineteenth aircraft for the carrier will be delivered in mid-1987.

* * *

PHILLIPS 66 COMPANY has discontinued production of X/C II aviation oil and is reintroducing the original X/C 20-50 aviation oil. Original oil is compatible with discontinued type and switch should not create need for additional expense, according to the manufacturer.

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PAGE AVJET CORPORATION has been chosen by Air Cargo Transport Systems, inc., Quebec, to install the Quiet Nacelle Corporation's noise reduction nacelle on the company's DC8-55F aircraft. Installation is performed at Page Avjet's Orlando International Airport facility.

* * *

FOKKER AIRCRAFT has received an order for two F27 Mark 400 aircraft from the Royal Thai Navy. Delivery is scheduled for late 1986 and early 1987.

* * *

WESTERN GEAR CORPORATION has closed its Washington D.C. government relations office and has dissolved the position of vice president, government relations, held by J. David Shlemmer. Sales headquarters, previously located in South Milwaukee, Wis. have been moved to Washington and will continue to be directed by Frank Taylor.

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